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ABSTRACT

The program outlined in this proposal describes various teaching techniques which are suited to the styles and strengths of disadvantaged students. The general approach is directed at convincing the disadvantaged student that he can learn and become educated without becoming a middle class stereotype--that he can retain his own identity. A "New Careers" program is also suggested which would allow inexperienced, untrained people to assume routine, daily tasks in the classroom in order to allow the teacher to concentrate on creative methods of teaching. Recruited from the community, male class room aides would provide male role models and reinforce the assurance that the deprived can succeed in the system. (KG)

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Blueprint for the Disadvantaged

by Frank Riessman

Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith

About the Author

Dr. Frank Riessman, professor of educational sociology, New York University, has also served on the faculties of the Albert Einstein College of Medicine and Columbia University. He is the author of *The Culturally Deprived Child*, and co-author of *Mental Health of the Poor* and *New Careers for the Poor*.

BLUEPRINT FOR THE DISADVANTAGED

Enormous interest has been expressed in recent years concerning the education of the disadvantaged, inner-city child. Current theory assumes that his learning difficulties result from a lack of basic preparation—that is, that he is socially inadequate, hasn't sufficient male figures in his life, has no books in his home, can't delay gratification and suffers from accumulated environmental and cultural deficits. Many programs are based on the premise that the poor child is out of step and needs reshaping. On the basis of such orientation, programs are generated that reenforce the inequality of education and the humiliation of the disadvantaged child.

Blueprint for the Disadvantaged seeks to analyze and evaluate the realistic goals in educating the disadvantaged by: (1) understanding and empathizing with the disadvantaged pupil and his world; and (2) exploring ways in which the teacher can best fulfill his role in educating him.

The architectural scheme to give pattern and form to our *Blueprint* includes:

- Recent History
- The Goals of Education
- The New Manpower
- New Careers as a Solution to Specific Manpower Needs
- Jobs First—Training Built In
- Basic Classroom Strategy
- Some General Do's and Don'ts
- The Dialect Game
- Capturing the Action Style Through Role-Playing
- Developing Teacher Styles
- The Helper Principle: Learning Through Teaching
- Program for a Revolution

As a working premise, we must start by assuming that all children want to learn but, somehow or other, they become "unmotivated." Substantial evidence exists to support this position. Martin Deutsch and others note eagerness for schooling when children first begin, followed by a declining enthusiasm the longer they are exposed to the school. Rather than being helpful, we, as society, have placed barriers to block the education of the poor.

Throughout the United States, programs for the education of the disadvantaged have met with varying success: in the Army, new approaches have overcome illiteracy in adults with surprising speed; programmed learning has had marked effects on dropouts in New York and prisoners in Alabama whose level of intellectual functioning was quite low; other methods—non-graded classes, multiple periods, use of imaginative gamelike techniques—have also shown considerable potential; Montessorian techniques have achieved results in Los Angeles and Mount Vernon; imaginative "hip" lessons combined with role-playing have proved exciting in Syracuse; team teaching has worked in Pittsburgh; new readers have improved reading levels of educationally deprived youngsters in Detroit.

Despite these encouraging reports, large-scale improvements in the learning of disadvantaged youngsters have not been achieved for at least three reasons:

1) The efforts have been piecemeal and unintegrated. One technique is used here and another there, but there has been no theoretically directed, integrated approach.

2) The major emphasis has been on deficits and "compensatory" efforts directed toward overcoming them. There has been little understanding of how to use the strengths and positives of disadvantaged youngsters if, indeed, it is recognized that these strengths exist at all.

3) There has been no concerted effort to meet the felt needs of the teachers—for lower student-teacher ratios, techniques that work, a voice in decisions that affect them. The classroom teacher has not been perceived typically as the strategic change agent for massive improvement in the learning of the poor. Instead, much stress has been placed on parents, pre-schools, teaching machines, psychological guidance, and special services.

Today there is also an underestimation of what desegregated education could achieve if properly mounted, due to the strange alliance of white conservatives and Negro militants. Moreover, there exists a naive overestimation regarding the possibilities of so-called quality segregated education. The segregated quality education goal—once discarded by white liberals and Negro activists—is being readopted with little examination. Many whites are relieved by the quality segregated education slogan, which eases their conscience and their fear.

This retreat within the Negro community is masked to some extent

by highly militant nationalist posturing about black power, going it alone, not wanting integration in the first place, and strong anti-white feeling. Frequently, it is accompanied by an attack on "the establishment," "the power structure," on the assumption that this group really wants segregation and discrimination. Actually the new goal represents a highly defensive reaction on the part of the Negro community while simultaneously feeding the backlash of the white community.

It is questionable whether segregated education will approach anything like quality levels for Negroes on a national scale. In fact, the Negro-white educational differential may actually increase nationally, although in isolated demonstrations some Negro gains may be won.

Moreover, we know that the achievements (especially some of the indirect ones) of the integrated education movement have been overlooked. We believe that a great deal more can be done in the integrated context if educational policy is reorganized to take into account previous mistakes. The purpose of this section, therefore, is to reanalyze the case for integrated education in the context of the mid-sixties' move toward segregated policies. But first, how has the retreat from integration occurred; what are its roots and what can be learned from the errors of the past?

Recent History*

In the civil rights movement, the selection of education as a major arena in which to fight for integration was originally rejected by many social scientists, liberals and progressives. The latter felt it was impossible to organize an integration drive in this area because education was simply a reflection of housing and economic conditions. But the civil rights leaders saw that the education system was fluid and provided a significant opening to highlight the demand for integration in the society. They were right. Initially, important victories were won; great attention centered on education; significant laws were passed; and an important forum emerged for the discussion of in-

*From *Social Class and Social Policy*, S. M. Miller and Frank Riessman; Basic Books, 1968.

tegration on a wide scale. Moreover, this drive in the education area led to increased funding for the education of the poor—and thus indirectly for the Negro.

A number of factors prevented the integration movement from winning major victories in the educational sphere. First perhaps is the fact that the inner city itself was residentially segregated, and becoming more so. This condition made it difficult to develop rapidly integrated schooling. Several school zoning patterns reinforced this factor, making it difficult to produce integration without changing school district boundaries, even where it was geographically possible. These circumstances provided a difficult context and allowed for easy development of backlash among conservative white middle-class and working-class groups who vigorously and often openly opposed integration. Many if not most white liberals who supported integration in principle had moved out of the inner city or retreated to private schools on the grounds that education was so deficient in the public schools that they could not endanger their children's educational future.

Political support for education was weak and vacillating. Federal and local governments responded to pressure by equivocating in their support of the civil rights position. School boards acted slowly; school redistricting was rare; minimum demands, such as open enrollment, were occasionally permitted; but deep, thoroughgoing reorganization was not supported with conviction or funds. Thus educational parks which might have provided a most vital structure for developing integrated quality education have not been attempted in any significant number. Where they have been planned, their construction has been delayed. The paired schools approach has lacked outstanding support from the local boards of education where it has been adopted. Reorganization of school levels with the new middle school playing an important role in abetting integration has not developed speedily. Most new schools in urban complexes are being built in segregated areas, sometimes in response to the demands of the citizens of these areas.

Highly significant, too, was the failure of the federal government to support former Education Commissioner Francis Keppel when he threatened to cut off federal funds to the city of Chicago unless it developed a faster pace in its integration plans. This was the out-

standing defeat in the development of integrated schools in the North.

Perhaps even more crucial was the educational failure itself. Integrating schools were not given sufficient support by the Federal government and the local school system. For the most part human relations workshops were established to discuss the human relations issues involved in integration, but essentially no large-scale economic support was provided for *educational programming* for the integrated school.

Teachers, poorly prepared for the new situation of integration and functioning in inadequate school structures in the first place, did not greet the new situation with hope, even when ideologically they were supportive. They were not assisted in developing effective groupings within the heterogeneous classroom. Instead, they were given ideas and courses about human relations and the value of integration; they were not aided in mastering teaching logic that would be more effective in the new situation.

Our contention is that for integrated education to succeed it is necessary to build the most advanced educational system within the integrated network. Integrated schools have to be the best schools in order to draw and hold reluctant parents. Parents would not mind bussing their children to the most excellent schools in the society—they do this all the time with special nurseries, art schools, music and dance schools. The sacrifice of bussing is mainly an issue to white middle-class parents when they are not sure what there is at the end of the line.

In this general climate, a revolutionary breakthrough in the education of the poor might be planned as a first step toward revitalizing our public schools and winning back the middle classes who have fled to the private schools. Truly, it is time to aim high and not accept improvement up to grade level.

The Goals of Education*

Modern United States is technologically advanced and depends on a highly interdependent structure for its sustenance and growth. The

*From "The New Manpower" (unpublished), by Dr. Arthur Pearl.

future bodes more of the same, which means that effective education of our youth will be even more challenging tomorrow than it is today. Defining the goals of education may help clarify the challenges. To do an adequate job in education the following must be accomplished:

1) Each student must have a wide range of choice of life career.

Basic to any concept of freedom is the range of occupational choice available to citizens. Evolutionary events have placed the school in a salient position in the matter of occupational choice. Not so many years ago there were many avenues available to the inadequately educated. This is no longer true; unskilled labor is becoming absolute, options for the poorly educated decline daily, and schools, rather than increasing options, tend to limit choice. Whenever a child is sorted into a "low ability" track his occupational choice is restricted. Whenever an adolescent is shunted into (what is euphemistically called) a vocational education, his occupational choice is restricted. In both instances he is not prepared for the largest and fastest growing, the most prestigious and highest paying occupations in our society. For these industries, a college education is the entry requirement.

2) Each student must have skills necessary to be a citizen in a complicated democratic society.

Many factors conspire to force government into increasing importance. Population growth places new kinds of demands on government. The same area of land must be shared by twice the number of people every thirty-five years. Technological development reduces this area in effective distance. It is now possible for the world virtually to decimate that population in an hour's time. Technological development also makes possible greater government control over individual behavior.

Government will serve its citizens and not become repressive only if the school generates politically competent electorates. To become politically competent, students must have *knowledge* about democratic processes. They must know about the centuries of struggle for human rights. But knowledge attained from passive information exchange is not enough. Students must not only discuss the importance of a Bill of Rights, they must also experience rights. Students must participate in meaningful judicial, legislative and executive decision-

making. Training for democratic citizenship should be developmental. In the early grades the experience will have to be guided, but as the student attains sophistication he should be delegated responsibility for management of the school community commensurate with his increased understanding.

The schools have never attained distinction as proving grounds for democratic citizenship. But bad as schools were in the past, they are even worse now. Increasingly repressive (particularly on the poor), and unable to deal effectively or justly with dissidence, schools bludgeon rather than instruct. Unable to perceive the monstrous irony of it all, schools attempt to program youth "to fit" rather than to engender in them the skills which would allow youth to alter society. The school not only does not sanction opposition to the establishment, the school is so arrogant in its power that no effort is made to be even *accountable* to students. Is it any wonder that social psychologists have found repeatedly that citizens will refuse to affix their signatures to a petition which requests support for the Bill of Rights because the message sounds suspiciously like "Communist propaganda?"

3) Each student must become a culture carrier.

The world is becoming increasingly interdependent. Technology changes the nature of human involvements from small, informal organizations into large, highly formalized relationships. This influence pervades every aspect of our existence. We live in a world of big business, big government and mass culture. Without adequate preparation for that world, man becomes overwhelmed. He is unable to cope adequately and as a consequence of the intransigence of bureaucratic machinery he is driven to a depersonalization and alienation by the impotence of his condition. Education can offer an antidote for this state of affairs. Art, music, literature, history and the study of science can enhance self-respect and social identity (as well as assist in the development of broader understanding which is essential for political competence alluded to in the preceding paragraphs).

Does the school instill an appreciation for learning *qua* learning? Hardly! Students get the message. "The grade is important, not the learning." And "soft courses" are deprecated. Often art and music courses become dumping grounds for "non-motivated" students. Is it any wonder that the common denominator for cultural transmission is that which is offered on commercial television?

4) Each student must be helped to intrapersonal and interpersonal competence.

By default, the school has become the primary socializing influence of our society. Technology has eroded the family influence; the family is unable to censor information or limit contact. The child is emancipated in one sense without a portfolio of skills necessary for a restricted, emancipated existence. The child of today knows more than other previous generations but is allowed to do less. The school has to repair this condition and therefore must provide the experience and the knowledge which will enable its graduates to live with themselves and with others.

Almost everything that happens in school cannot be justified. The school limps along with simplistic and antiquated social organization. Students are forced into silly (and often grossly unfair) competition with their peers. The school must create relatively non-threatening environments in which students learn not only to cope with the demands of current organization but also to be given the tools to make changes in that society whenever changes are needed.

The monumental task of providing manpower, adequate in quantity and quality to attain the goals of education, will require dedication of research activity unlike anything ever attempted by educational investigators. Such activity will require establishment of priorities.

What, then, should be the ingredients for our projected revolution in education? Should we combine all the various features that have worked in a kind of potpourri, or should we selectively choose approaches based on an analysis which offers an explanation, in coherent fashion, of why they have worked? The latter is not only more meaningful theoretically, but probably less expensive.

Following is a proposal of the outlines of such a program.

The New Manpower

Perhaps the major complaint in the schools today is the size of classes that teachers must manage. The ratio of students to teachers is often greater than thirty to one. New manpower to assist the badly

overworked teacher is the paramount need of the day. Where can it be found? The utilization of large numbers of people drawn from the ranks of the poor, themselves, so-called non-professionals, to serve as teacher assistants, teacher aides, parent-teacher coordinators and the like, may be the answer.

In the classroom currently there is but one designated role—that of teacher. Incorporated in that role are many diverse functions; the teacher is not only an educator but also clerk, custodian, operator of audio-visual equipment, and audio-version of a printed book. In many slum schools the impression is that the teacher is part lion tamer and part warehouseman. These roles must be eliminated; many of the others can be assumed by less qualified personnel.

Today there are probably over 300,000 new nonprofessionals in the United States, most of the jobs having been created by the anti-poverty legislation. Estimates indicate that 130,000 such full-time human service positions were produced for "indigenous" nonprofessionals by the Office of Economic Opportunity. Presently through Title I of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act some 123,000 teacher aides are being employed. Medicare will involve many thousands more as home health aides.

At its 1966 convention, Americans for Democratic Action proposed that 5 million of these jobs be created in public services. Congress has enacted the Scheuer-Nelson Sub-Professional Career Act which will appropriate approximately $70 million to employ and train untrained, unemployed people in these needed jobs.

New Careers as a Solution to Specific Manpower Needs

The goals of education make schooling a more ambitious undertaking than anything ever attempted in this country. These goals cannot be obtained with the present pupil-teacher ratio. Although it would be premature to suggest optimal ratios, a working estimate is that ratios should be reduced from the 25 to 1 that now exists to something nearer to eight pupils to every person in a teacher role.

By 1975 there will be almost 20 per cent more persons of school age

than there were in 1965. In addition, many more of this age group will be going to school. It is quite clear that an appreciable number of children will start school at an early age. Many others will stay in school longer, graduate from high school, matriculate to college, graduate from college and aspire to higher degrees. Given possibly twice as many students and reduction by a third of pupil-teacher ratios, it is probable that by 1975 instead of the 2½ million teachers needed, over 5 million persons will be needed in teaching roles. It is absolutely impossible to develop such persons without some kind of utilization of persons other than certified teachers in the classroom.

It has become increasingly clear that persons other than certified teachers have a role in a school program. There are in excess of 100,000 such persons now employed in some capacity in school systems in the United States. Different approaches may be taken toward this group. They may be:

1) The Plantation Treatment

The nonprofessional school worker may be hired at extremely low wages and for irregular hours. At best he is marginal to the education process. No effort is made to train this worker, both because it would be uneconomical and also because there is the danger that, once trained, the non-professional might become "uppity."

2) The New Careers Treatment

The New Careers approach places all positions on a continuum. A person rises in status as he attains competence. He is able to attain the top level by many routes, and he is able to cross over to related fields or to the appropriate university standing. The approach has two unique features: It has more flexibility; and it allows for assessment of ability, based on actual job performance.

The Complexity of the New Careers Model

This proposal calls for coordination between higher education institutions, local school systems, state departments of education and

legislatures. The higher education establishments must be willing to venture out there where education is taking place. The school must define meaningful roles for each level of activity. The State Department of Education must legitimate these roles, and through appropriate certification procedures and laws, must create enabling statutes that both allow for the hiring and make available the necessary funds.

New Careers will not emerge as Venus on the half-shell. It will take considerable experimentation until all the bugs are worked out of each aspect of the system. What is currently needed is a relatively small number of carefully scrutinized demonstrations, these to become the beachheads from which more extensive programs can be launched.

Justification of New Careers Strategy

There can be only three reasons for suggesting change in the manner in which manpower is supplied to education. These are:

1) To improve the quality of service.

2) To develop adequate manpower for education needs.

3) To make available meaningful work to populations now excluded from a range of occupational opportunity.

There is some reason to believe that New Careers can accomplish all of these aims.

The most obvious way that the New Careers approach can lead to improved service is by providing a much larger universe from which manpower might be drawn. At the present time, except for menial roles, teachers come from that select population that graduates from college (and, as observed by James Conant and others, we do not even get the best of this group). As a consequence, the teacher population is heavily biased by social class. Abundant evidence exists in the outbursts against schools in almost every urban area in this country that this population of school personnel is having great difficulty relating to children from diverse backgrounds. Middle-class youths also suffer from this restricted experience. In the highly interdepen-

dent world which is emerging they too need to have meaningful relationships with persons from diverse backgrounds. A New Careers approach would allow students contact with personnel from a wide variety of backgrounds and experience, thus facilitating attainment of the goal which leads to greater intra- and interpersonal competence. The quality of education is undermined when persons who relate well to young people, with valuable knowledge and experience to share, the skills to share that knowledge and experience, and a sensitivity to the problems of youth, are denied entrance to a teaching profession because they lack the formal education requirements.

The New Careers approach offers a training procedure which at least in theory should produce more qualified teachers. Calling for long-term supervised practical experience as part of the training, the New Careers approach should bring a level of competence at the professional and near professional level that we are not attaining now, using present methods.

New Careers allows for greater efficiency and therefore higher quality of training. At the present time persons can invest half a decade of their lives in pre-service preparation only to find that the actual experience differs greatly from the anticipated situation. The only recourse left to a teacher then is to struggle in a job situation which is not fulfilling (and thereby renege on his obligations to students) or to leave the field. The latter alternative comes at great expense to the taxpayer.

The use of this new type of nonprofessional manpower would serve many positive functions:

1) It would release teachers from the many nonprofessional tasks they now perform—taking attendance, helping youngsters with their boots, tying children's shoelaces, operating motion picture projectors, taking pupils on trips, etc. The new teacher aides would take over many of these tasks, thus freeing teachers for their basic professional assignment—teaching—and teaching creatively.

2) The nonprofessionals (especially males), drawn from the ranks of the poor, would serve as excellent role models for disadvantaged youngsters who would discover that people like themselves, drawn from their own neighborhood, can "make it" in the system.

3) Communication between the trained nonprofessional and the dis-

advantaged pupil would probably be good, because the nonprofessional, drawn from the neighborhood, would speak the language of the poor and understand his peers. Many advantages of peer learning or learning from people at the same level would be utilized.

4) The atmosphere of the school would be quite different; many management problems that are anticipated in urban, newly integrated schools might be dissipated. Undoubtedly the best way to introduce nonprofessionals into the system would be to ask teachers to volunteer to accept aides. These teachers could then define the tasks on which they would like nonprofessional assistance. (They might also receive consultation from the program planners.) It is likely that if the aides were helpful, the program would spread and other teachers would request nonprofessional classroom assistants. In this way, the idea could be institutionalized with the full cooperation of the professional staff, and the new professional-nonprofessional team would be built on a solid foundation.

It goes without saying that the use of aides would not be imposed on teachers. In fact, teachers' associations and unions should participate in the entire planning for the use of nonprofessionals; guarantees should be made to insure that aides would not infringe on the teachers' professional domain.

Jobs First—Training Built In

The New Careers concept suggests that jobs normally allotted to highly trained professionals or technicians can be performed by inexperienced, untrained people, if the tasks are broken down properly. These initial jobs form the entry position. The notion is *jobs first, training built in;* that is, the job becomes the motivator for further development on the part of the nonprofessional.

The idea is to provide people with employment first and diplomas later and to introduce training while the workers are on the job, with concomitant college courses provided largely at the job base. This concept is the direct opposite of one of the most popular ideas in

America, namely that one has to obtain long years of education before he can perform a meaningful job. The New Careers concept stresses instead that the job be provided initially and that training, upgrading and added education be built in. It is possible to begin, for example, as a teacher's aide and while obtaining courses on the job, in the evening, and during the summer, rise within a short period of time to become an assistant teacher, then an emergency teacher (or associate teacher) and ultimately a fully licensed professional teacher. In a plan developed by Scientific Resources, Inc. for the Newark School System, it was proposed that individuals with less than a high school education go through these steps while working full-time, obtaining an entry salary of approximately $4,000 per year and becoming full-fledged teachers in five to six years.* The Newark Teachers' Association, which requested that teacher-aides be part of the school system, won this point as part of its contract.

It is going to be necessary to have training designs which allow for the confrontation of the nonprofessional and the professional, with full open discussion of the difficulties they have with each other or anticipate having with each other. Trainers need to be prepared to handle these potential cleavages and issues in order to work toward the full development of the nonprofessional-professional team.

Frequently, professionals assume that nonprofessionals identify with the poor and possess great warmth and feeling for the neighborhood of their origin. While many nonprofessionals exhibit some of these characteristics, they simultaneously possess additional characteristics. Often, they see themselves as quite different from the other members of the poor community whom they may view with pity, annoyance, or anger. Nevertheless, they have considerable knowledge of the neighborhood and its traditions and they communicate easily with many different types of people in the area. They both literally and figuratively talk the language of the poor and have some similarities in style, values and traditions. Nonprofessionals also have a good deal of neighborhood know-how and understanding. They are particularly good at functioning and communicating on an informal level. However, there are many different "types" of nonprofessionals. Some are earthy, some are tough, some are angry, some are surprisingly articulate, some are slick, and nearly all are greatly concerned about

*Copies of the plan may be obtained by writing to Scientific Resources, Inc., 1191 Morris Ave., Union, New Jersey.

their new roles and their relationships to professionals.

It is most important to note, then, that nonprofessionals are frequently quite competitive with professionals. In essence, many nonprofessionals think they're different from the poor and would be more effective than the professionals if they had a chance. They are aware of the new ideology regarding nonprofessionals which calls attention to the special properties (style, etc.) which enable the nonprofessional to communicate with the low-income community in an effective manner. They feel this gives them something of an edge over professionals, and when combined with the training and knowledge they are acquiring in the professional structure, they will be doubly "smart." They will incorporate the intelligence based on their history with the new knowledge based on their training. It is not at all unusual to find a nonprofessional who has imaginatively combined these two levels and is remarkably effective in dealing with problems at various levels.

While nonprofessionals may be selected because of certain characteristics they possess, such as informality, humor, earthiness, neighborliness—in other words some of the "positive" characteristics of the resident population—the other side of the coin cannot be ignored. That is, they may possess characteristics of low-income populations that interfere with effective helper roles. For example, they may have considerable moral indignation, punitiveness, suspicion, or they may be so open and friendly on occasion that the significance of confidentiality escapes them.

Thus, while the training staff will want to build on their positive helping traits and potential skills, to some extent there must be an effort to either train out or control some of these other negative characteristics (negative in playing the helping role in a social service framework). In addition, it should always be remembered that we are probably not selecting a representative "lower-class" population but in all likelihood are selecting "bridge" people who can communicate with both class groups (the low-income group and our own middle-class population).

One of the greatest problems experienced by the nonprofessional is role ambiguity or lack of role identity. That is, he doesn't know who he is or who he is becoming. He is no longer a simple member of the community if he ever was one, nor is he a professional. Actually, he

is a highly marginal person. He may represent the poor, but he is not the poor. He uses his knowledge, his history, his past to bring a new voice of the poor into the system; but he too is now in the system. And he must be able to communicate and assist the professionals in his agency and in other agencies with whom he has relationships. There are necessary strains in this new role and they must be accepted openly and dealt with. In the pre-job training phase this new role should be defined from the beginning, but it will have little meaning to the nonprofessional except as a broad orientation base, until he is faced by the role conflicts in practice.

The actual training technology emphasizes building on the style of the trainee and expanding it; learning through doing, role-playing, job simulation and field exercises; highly explicit, concrete, inductive presentations; peer learning and learning through teaching others (helper principle); task-oriented, functional learning; considerable *over-training.*

Training for teaching aides begins by assigning an aide to an experienced teacher, who is given release time to prepare the aide. In this setting the aide can learn teaching methods, classroom management techniques, and he can become familiar with content. Six units of college credit are suggested for this component of training. In addition, three units of theory would be offered the aides. In this course (or seminar) learning, perception and motivation, sociological principles, and group dynamics would be discussed at a level commensurate with classroom function. The theory would be connected to practice through reference to problems encountered in the performance of duties.

The liberal arts aspect of training can be offered through courses brought to the school, and all levels of staff, as well as residents in the community, could participate in discussion. In similar fashion, training could be offered higher echelon personnel with the level of instruction pitched to the level of activity.

There are some palpable inadequacies in current pre-service training programs for teachers, e.g., remoteness of training from classroom function, lack of connection between theory and practice, fragmentation of training effort, years of pre-service experience without opportunity to verify if teaching is the desired career, irrelevance and impracticability of training for difficulties encountered in actual ex-

perience. Our proposed blueprint can remedy these difficulties.

It is time that teachers concentrate on teaching, and develop and apply that art and science to the utmost. It is toward this objective that the following techniques are directed.

Basic Classroom Strategy

Everything the teacher says and does in the classroom should be related to learning. He should repeat over and over again, "I am here to teach and you are here to learn." This should be expressed in the teacher's every action and should be related to every rule and value.

Thus all rules relating to punctuality, aggression, and general behavior should be strictly oriented toward their usefulness in relation to learning. (e.g., "We cannot conduct a class if children fight, come late, walk around, etc.") This is not a minister informing children about values—that fighting is "bad"; it is a teacher conducting a class.

Techniques and Goals

The emphasis on teaching technology is of infinite importance to the entire effort. Teachers cannot be expected to become sociologists or psychologists and acquire an intensive understanding of the psychology and culture of the poor. They must come to understand how their techniques are related to the style and strength of the poor, but emphasis must be on the techniques themselves. As teachers successfully utilize these techniques their confidence will improve and their motivation will be enhanced. The accent here, therefore, is on giving the teachers what they want, namely know-how.

The techniques should be based fundamentally on the goals one is striving for with the disadvantaged. The goal is not simply to produce a carbon copy of the middle-class child.* To aim for this middle-class

*The real question for those who want to "middle-classize" the disadvantaged child relates to which middle class and which middle-class goals and values—the professional upper middle class; the anti-intellectual lower middle class; the new "hip" class that has adopted much of the speech and some of the manners of various disadvantaged subcultures; the progressive student left, etc. Furthermore, isn't it possible that the disadvantaged youngster will selectively choose those middle-class characteristics that at least articulate some of his own traditions and feelings?

replica is not only inappropriate in principle but not easily achievable in practice. The disadvantaged child will probably resist this objective, and to the extent that he acquiesces become a poor edition of the middle-class youngster, a very faded carbon copy. The objective, therefore, is to build on the strengths of the inner-city child, not by denying or suppressing them but by utilizing them, for example, as the key to developing language and interest in language. The purpose of building on the strengths of the disadvantaged child is not to bring him more efficiently into the mainstream of American life, but to have him contribute to this mainstream his style, his pep, his vitality, his demand that school not be dull and boring, his rich feeling for metaphor and colorful language.

Likewise, in education the mainstream of American life can profit from the demands made by the poor that the school system be livelier, more vital, more down to earth; and also in the style and interests brought to the school by these groups. This style will enable the school to be far less bookish, and will enable it to utilize a variety of styles—an action style, a physical style, a visual style—far more than the over-utilized and over-emphasized reading-lecture styles traditionally in vogue.

The techniques to be discussed are uniquely related to these goals and to the belief that among the disadvantaged there is a positive style which can be utilized to the great benefit of all classes. If this goal is not accepted, however, the techniques can still be employed with varying degrees of effectiveness. Thus the reader can go on even if he does not accept the overall objective.

Attitude Change Through Interest

The change of teachers' attitudes toward disadvantaged children requires exposition. Many people contend that it is extremely important to respect disadvantaged children—that this is the key to winning them to education. But the key to respecting someone is knowing the positives in him, his strengths. Too many people who talk about respecting these youngsters truly see nothing to respect. Consequently their discussion of respect is empty and meaningless. This

is the reason why it is crucial to stress the positives in the culture, behavior and style of the disadvantaged.

These positives include: the cooperativeness and mutual aid that mark the extended family; the avoidance of the strain accompanying competitiveness and individualism; the equalitarianism, informality and humor; the freedom from self-blame and parental overprotection; the children's enjoyment of each other's company and the lessened sibling rivalry; the security found in the extended family and a traditional outlook; the enjoyment of music, games, sports and cards; the ability to express anger; the freedom from being wordbound; and, finally, the physical style involved in learning.

These positives must be spelled out in detail lest they become vague, romantic, sentimental or demagogic. We need clear vision regarding the positives in people who are forced to cope with a difficult environment, who express their anger toward the school, who are frustrated over the discrimination directed against them.

The point is that you cannot have respect in a general kind of way. To have genuine respect you must know the culture, how these people cope with their environment, and you must appreciate how they have built their culture in grappling with the world around them.

However, the teacher's understanding and respect are not enough. It is necessary also to change his *attitude.* Although this might appear to be difficult, it is easier than one might imagine. The most important element to be modified is the interest of the teacher in the disadvantaged and their culture.

Generally, teachers and other school personnel have shown little interest in the makeup of these youngsters. For the most part, the poor have been viewed as an undifferentiated, drab mass. Controversy and ferment about the poor and their psychology should be introduced to create interest. The writer would argue that the current proposals for providing teachers with sociological analyses of disadvantaged groups, while valuable, are not sufficient to generate true excitement over these people. Anthropology is more useful, but the time is ripe for teacher preparation to include reading novels, viewing films, seeing art and dance, hearing music of various low income groups, particularly the Negro and Spanish-speaking.

For example, discussions should be built around books like *The*

Cool World, by Warren Miller, and the movie made from the book. Movies and literature give us a keener insight into what exists in these cultures—a different kind of perspective.

Considerable discussion of Negro history and Negro contributions in science, art and engineering should be included in this kind of teacher training.* A discussion of "hip" language would also be helpful. A perusal of *Hiptionary,* by Elliot Horne (Simon and Schuster, 1963), would be especially valuable because it provides a feeling for the language of some disadvantaged groups. *Hiptionary* offers some notion of their wonderful ability to verbalize, and breaks through the absurd idea that these people lack such skill. In certain situations this ability might not be formal (and the school should certainly make this clear) but they do verbalize in a highly imaginative way.

In an attempt to bridge the language gap, teachers can show their respect for "another language," and recognize its existence. *Play It Cool,*** a pamphlet about hip words, provides a kind of word game that offers students a motivation for language learning and awareness of the uses of language. The booklet is accompanied by a teacher's guide which explains objectives and uses for *Play It Cool* as well as general directions for its function.

The first area in this program to change teachers' attitudes is concerned with building respect through developing interest and excitement over the psychology and culture of the poor.

Prepared Exposure

Another area focuses on developing appropriate laboratory experiences for teachers. Among a number of programs emerging is the Hunter College pre-service program described at some length in *The Culturally Deprived Child****; another is the Mobilization for Youth in-service program in New York City.

**Teachers Guide to American Negro History,* by William Loren Katz, Quadrangle Books, Inc., 1967, offers a broad base for this kind of discussion, as does *The Negro Pilgrimage in America,* by C. Eric Lincoln, Bantam, 1967. Both are available through the Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith.

***Co-authored by Dr. Frank Riessman and John Dawkins. Published by Follett Publishing Co., Chicago, Ill., 1967.

****The Culturally Deprived Child,* Frank Riessman, Harper 1962, pp. 118-119.

Programs of this kind tend to stress visiting the homes and neighborhoods of the poor. Many believe that *exposure* of teachers (as well as practitioners, guidance counselors, psychologists) to the homes and environment of the disadvantaged will be positive in and of itself. Actually, simple exposure which has occurred in many places throughout the country can reinforce existing stereotypes about the disadvantaged. The reason for this (which is very obvious) is that teachers, like everyone else, selectively see what they *want* to see, what they have been prepared to see by their previous training.

Consequently, carefully directed, prepared exposure is suggested here so that teachers will understand *what* to look for and *how* to look at the culture of the low income groups involved—so that they won't simply see a broken family but rather an extended female-based family which, although different from the traditional family, is highly organized in many ways. They will learn to see how family duties are delegated and organized, how child-rearing is handled, how cooking is assigned, how some family members take care of the house, how others go to work, and the way responsibility is divided in general.

The teachers will also have to be taught not to confuse the normal and the pathological. The normal female-based family is not pathological, but pathology does occur in some families. A look at the middle-class family perhaps will clarify the confusion regarding the pathological and the normal. In some middle-class strata, child-rearing may have strong traces of parental overprotection, overindulgence, and the like. This may be the norm, just as less direct, intensive loving is normative in lower socio-economic groups. But neither pattern by itself is abnormal, even though the pathologies in both classes may well be related to the normative pattern. (They may reflect the normative pattern in its extreme form or express constitutional reaction of particular individual children to the norm, etc.)

Teachers need an understanding of the basic culture (the norm) rather than an emphasis on pathology or a focus on the environment as such—the crowdedness, the lack of privacy, the lack of economic security. The focus should shift to how these people struggle with their environment, how they have forged a culture in struggling, and how this culture and style might be utilized in the school situation. It is clear, then, that we cannot call for "tours" and home visits. Teachers must be carefully prepared to look beneath the environ-

ment and the surface behavior, in order to comprehend fully the meaning of the life and behavior of the poor.

Some General Do's and Don'ts

This area considers general do's and don'ts, the dimensions of which will be touched upon briefly.

Consistency is fundamental, as are structure and order. Informality and authority are not seen as contradictions, and the poor like both.

Extrinsic rewards and punishments are understood, but brutality is strongly rejected. The teacher should be straightforward, direct, and should define clearly what is to be done as much as possible.

Values related to order, tardiness, aggression, behavior, should be strictly oriented toward their usefulness in terms of learning.

Miriam Goldberg states:

> The successful teacher meets the disadvantaged child on equal terms, as person to person, individual to individual. But while he *accepts, he doesn't condone.* He sets clearly defined limits for his pupils and will brook few transgressions. He is aware that, unlike middle-class children, they rarely respond to exhortations intended to control behavior through invoking feelings of guilt and shame. He, therefore, sets the rules, fixes the boundaries, establishes the routines with a minimum of discussion. Here he is impersonal, undeviating, strict, but never punitive. Within these boundaries the successful teacher is businesslike and orderly, knowing that he is there to do a job. But he is also warm and outgoing, adapting his behavior to the individual pupils in his class. He shows his respect and liking for his pupils and makes known his belief in their latent abilities.*

On the issue of do's and don'ts, the different stages of the teaching process should be considered. There are two crucial stages to be considered—stage one, the contact stage, the special breaking-through to the child, winning his attention. Although this is sometimes exaggerated as a problem, it does present difficulties in preparing teachers, who must develop a technology in dealing with this particular challenge. Unfortunately, many teachers who succeed in stage one (obtaining orderly classes, attention, etc.) do not move on to stage two,

*Miriam Goldberg, "Adapting Teacher Style to Pupil Differences," paper delivered at Teachers' College Conference on Disadvantaged Children, July 1963, p. 9.

which concerns itself with developing educational power.* Although they succeed in achieving the stage one situation, their stopping short of stage two is unfortunate.

The Dialect Game

The best way to illustrate the relationship of the teaching technology advocated here and the goals set forth is to look at one simple technique learned from a teacher who evolved it from her own practice.

One day a youngster remarked to this teacher, "Do you hear that boid outside the window?", to which she responded, "That's not a boid; it's a bird." Following the old joke, the youngster replied, "He choips just like a boid." It is fairly clear that this means of teaching the standard pronunciations of words might not only fail in its avowed objective, but might also produce cognitive confusion about the object itself.

Thereupon the teacher decided that it would be easy to teach standard pronunciations if pupils were not required to reject their own dialects, their slang, their "hip" language. She decided to play a game, taking any word at random, asking the youngsters how it would be pronounced in their language and how it would sound in standard language. The game proved exciting and instructive to both pupils and teacher. They learned the new words as they would a foreign language, and discovered that their own language was perfectly acceptable in the proper circumstances—in discussions with friends, family, and on the street. For formal purposes, however, another language was appropriate and was being taught in school.

But this experience encompassed other results. The pupils became interested in language as such: e.g., in discussing the "hip" word *cool*, it was decided that words like *calm* and *collected* and the more advanced *nonchalant* were appropriate synonyms. However, it was noted also that these were not perfect equivalents of *cool;* thus, indirectly, language nuances were taught. The youngsters began to understand why we use foreign phrases that cannot be translated

*For a more complete discussion of these stages see Frank Riessman, *The Culturally Deprived Child*, Harper, 1962, pp. 94-95.

literally, i.e., *coup d'etat*—because they have connotations or overtones in their original language which would not be duplicated in ours.

They learned something else, too. They learned that their own language was not to be denied or suppressed, that many of their words had flavor and meaning which had not been fully acquired in the standard language, and that therefore the slang and "hip" words had already been adopted by the larger culture. Today *jazz, cooling it, copping out* and many more rich, colorful words and phrases are in accepted conversational usage in the English language. This is building on their positives, not rejecting them, and incorporating their strengths and interests into the mainstream of our life.

There are many simple adaptations of this dialect game. The writer recently employed a hiptionary in a systematic and formal fashion, while tutoring a disadvantaged high school student in English. The first and immediate result was that the student learned many new English word definitions for the "hip" words with which she was long familiar:

"Hip" Word*	**Definition**
bug	to disturb, bother, annoy
cop out	to avoid conflict by running away, not considered admirable or honorably accepted
cool it	to be quiet, peaceful, tranquil
far out	not comprehendible
weak	inadequate, inappropriate

Words like *tranquil, inappropriate,* among others, were unfamiliar to this youngster, but through use of the "hip" word game she quickly grasped them and derived great pleasure from a new-found use of so-called big words.

Another interesting illustration is furnished by the problem of teaching English to Puerto Rican and Mexican children entering our school systems in New York, California and other parts of the country. The typical tendency is to force these youngsters to speak only English rather than their mother tongue, namely Spanish, on the supposition that this would be the best way to learn the English language.

*The words in this list were taken from a hiptionary titled *The Other Language,* developed by Anthony Romeo at Mobilization for Youth, January, 1962, unpublished.

While this may be a perfectly acceptable means of teaching language to an adult in certain contexts, when it is associated in the child with rejection of his minority culture (something he experiences quite frequently), he is unlikely to be an apt pupil in the new language. Furthermore, he is constantly in the inferior position of having to acquire this language while the remainder of the youngsters in the class already know it.

The dialect game can be utilized beautifully to reverse the whole procedure. Instead of emphasizing the need for the Spanish children to learn English, the situation can be reversed for part of the day; and the Spanish children can be instructed to teach Spanish to the American children. In other words, both languages become important in the class. The English-speaking children have an opportunity to learn a foreign language, presumably a positive benefit when that language is French or Latin, and the Spanish children can be placed temporarily in the position of some superiority through helping others. In addition, of course, in order for the Puerto Rican youngster to teach Spanish to the American child, he must be able to communicate to some extent in English. In the very process of teaching the foreign language he must acquire more English in order to communicate (unless *he* arbitrarily insists that only Spanish be spoken when he is instructing!).

Thus the dialect game, which can be used by anyone as a gimmick or an auxiliary technique in teaching, takes on considerable depth when seen in the context of two cultures, two languages functioning alongside each other, both being respected, both affecting each other with no condescension toward the minority culture.

Capturing the Action Style Through Role-Playing

Role-playing has long been popular with disadvantaged youngsters. This technique is congenial with the low income person's style—physical (action-oriented, doing, rather than only talking); down-to-earth, concrete, problem-directed; externally oriented rather than introspective; group-centered; gamelike rather than test-oriented; easy,

informal in tempo. In essence, disadvantaged youngsters tend to work out mental problems best when they can do things physically (whether it be through role-playing, dance, taking a trip, etc.).

Role-playing may be used, as Professor Lawrence Senesch observes, to teach arithmetic and economics (by playing store); to teach history by acting out, for example, George Washington signing the Constitution; even language can be taught by acting out words. (In fact, the game "In the Manner of the Adverb" consists of "doing" the adverb—e.g., walking *quickly*, writing *quickly*, etc.)

A Route to Verbalization

In role-playing sessions it has been observed that the verbal performance of deprived children is improved markedly in the discussion period following the session. When talking about actions they have seen, deprived children apparently verbalize well. Typically, they do not verbalize well in response to words alone. They express themselves more readily when reacting to whatever they can see and do. Words as stimuli are not sufficient for them, as a rule. Ask a youngster who comes from a disadvantaged background what he doesn't like about school or the teacher and you will get an abbreviated, inarticulate reply. But have a group of these youngsters act out a school scene in which someone plays the teacher and you will discover a stream of verbal consciousness that it is almost impossible to shut off.*

We cannot detail here all the various techniques and approaches that might be utilized in our program of education for the poor. *Scope* magazine presents a variety of games and approaches suited to the *action* style of these youngsters.

Any of the following might be important extras to be added, depending upon the *style, interests* and *abilities* of the teachers involved in the program:

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*Role-playing has been utilized to some extent in the schools but there has been little awareness of its special potential for connecting with the style of the disadvantaged and as a crucial avenue for developing their verbalization. Its use may serve a very different function for middle-class children; it may force them to be more concrete and reduce some of their overt intellectualization tendencies. Teachers should be aware of these different potential uses of role-playing.

1) The *organics* approach of Sylvia Ashton-Warner* should be especially valuable in utilizing the interests and strengths of the youngsters, and should guard against their being acted upon (the current trend in many of the compensatory programs designed for disadvantaged who are supposedly "deficit"-ridden).

2) A modified curriculum, developed by Gail Donovan in Boston, which stimulated vastly increased interest in literature among poor youngsters.

3) Use of the dance as a method for developing concepts and language as developed by Claire Schmais in Washington, D.C.

4) Arthur Jensen's techniques for developing verbal mediators (silent speech, so to speak) in problem-solving.

What Does Role-Playing Accomplish?

A. Role-playing provides a full, inner feeling about a situation through acting out how other people actually feel in the situation.

B. Role-playing gives a picture of one's approach and style through discussion and certain special devices, e.g., reward, projection, seconds, mirror (see *Techniques Used in Role-Playing*).

C. Role-playing aims to get a feeling of *movement* on a problem—a small change rather than a complete solution, because it

1) breaks the equilibrium and points to new approaches to a problem;

2) increases the participant's *role flexibility* in an atmosphere where he can take a chance with different kinds of behavior, without experiencing the tension and guilt of a real problem situation.

D. Role-playing can produce attitude changes by placing persons in specific roles. It becomes apparent that a person's behavior is not only a function of his personality but also of the situation and role in which he finds himself.

E. Role-playing trains a person to be aware of and sensitive to the

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******Teacher*, Sylvia Ashton-Warner, Simon and Schuster, 1963.

feelings of others. This information serves as a feedback of the effect his behavior has on others.

F. Role-playing graphically illustrates how the same set of events can be perceived differently.

G. Role-playing allows the person to gain in the freeing of expression, the release of hostility and frustration.

H. Role-playing is a little like witchery, as Jacob L. Moreno points out; by playing another person, you "take their sting away" and gain their magic power for yourself.

What Learnings Take Place in Role-Playing?

A. Much incidental learning is absorbed through discussing and actually witnessing the role-playing.

B. Kinesthetic, emotional, and experiential learning are part of the process, not merely intellectual learning.

C. Learning of role-flexibility and *spontaneity* is an integral part of role-playing.

D. Participants learn how to move—be physical, not merely sit and talk.

E. The technique increases a person's repertoire and potential by helping him to explore his skills and *possibilities.*

F. The emotional dimension in role-playing leads to more meaningful insight and better carrying through (of changes in behavior).

The Techniques Used in Role-Playing

A. *Reversal*—the two players switch roles, e.g., the person playing the social worker then reverses and plays the client.

B. *Second or double or backer-up*—a person who speaks at the same time as the role player, quietly, standing behind him. He prompts the

role player with words and gestures. He may be an assistant of the group leader, or any person from the group.

C. *Mirror*—another person plays the same role, but exaggerating the person's main difficulty or weakness, thus clarifying the errors being made.

D. *Soliloquy*—if the person is diffident or has difficulty in expressing his thoughts to the other person, he may just face away and talk to no one in particular, e.g., "I wish this guy would leave me alone; he's making me angry; I feel like walking out..."

E. *Projection*—the person role-plays the situation as he would ideally like it to be, e.g., the social worker tells what the "perfect" client would be like (cooperative, helpful, friendly). This acts as a positive catharsis.

F. *Training*—participants learn movement, gesture, non-verbal dimensions.

1) They are asked to gesture, move around, touch things, touch each other, use their bodies in expression.

2) Movement may express feelings where words are limited. Words may be eliminated and the subject may gesture the way he feels.

G. *Emphasizing*—strong and weak points in a person's style, to allow him to realize his full potential. Form as well as content should be discussed.

Teaching Subject Matter to Children

Role-playing can have beneficial results in the teaching of material in the school. Considerable excitement is added to a lecture when a point is illustrated by the instructor with role-playing. Most likely the incident will be long remembered by the audience. And if an enquiring student should wonder what Abraham Lincoln, for example, would think of our present civil rights policy, let Lincoln and Lyndon Johnson stage a debate enacted by two students! The impossibilities of

time and space are eliminated, and the civics lesson will be well remembered.

Role-playing has been used successfully as an aid in teaching Spanish*; it has been employed with positive results in teaching current events through use of "the living newspaper," in which news situations are acted out in order to make the news more exciting†; it has been utilized effectively in teaching feeble-minded children**; it has been used in the laboratory method of teaching social science and behavior, where the stress is on learning by observing and doing, and the classroom teacher leads the pupils through a scientific analysis of the role played with samples of behavior††; it has been used for improving handwriting in children***.

Rosemary Lippitt has employed role-playing in the teaching of literature and biology. She found that when students experienced the emotional situations depicted in the readings through role-playing, the material sprang to life for them. In teaching biology she asked students to visualize sequoia trees, to act out cutting through the trees, and to pretend to examine a stump to determine its age. Her article contains many examples that demonstrate the utility of role-playing for teaching textbook facts and lessons as well as interpersonal skills. It contains many helpful suggestions about skills and techniques that can be used by teachers in the younger grades.[1]

In the Syracuse Madison Area Project devoted to developing new methods for educating disadvantaged youngsters, role-playing dramatically improved verbal performance.

Gerald Weinstein, Curriculum Coordinator of the Project, introduced the youngsters to a poem by Langston Hughes called "Motto," in which one of the lines is: "I play it cool." The students liked the poem very much but had difficulty at first explaining the meaning of this line. They decided to act out a situation to see if it would help:

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*Short, R., "Role-Playing in Adult Spanish Classes," *Sociatry*, 1948, 2, 333-35.

†Cook, M., and Tregawlyn, J., "Instructions to Teachers from a Unit, 'An Intercultural Action Technique for the Secondary School,' " *Sociatry*, 1948, 2, 281-83.

**Sarbin, R., "Spontaneity Training of the Feeble-minded" in *Group Psychotherapy*, ed. J. Moreno, New York: Beacon House, 1946.

††Lippitt, R., Lippitt, P., and Fox, R., "Children Look at Their Own Behavior," *N.E.A. Journal*, September 1964, 14-16.

***Lippitt, Rosemary, and Hubbell, Ann, "Role-Playing for Personnel and Guidance Workers," *Group Psychotherapy*, 1956, 9, 89-114.

[1]Ibid.

Weinstein took the part of a teacher and a boy pretended he was walking down the hallway. "Hey you," said the teacher, "you're on the wrong side of the hall. Get over where you belong." Without looking up, the boy very calmly and slowly walked to the other side and continued without any indication of what was going on in his mind. That was playing it cool.

When Weinstein asked a boy to show what he would do when not playing it cool, a verbal battle ensued.

The class began offering definitions for "playing it cool"—calm and collected, no strain.

Weinstein suggested another—nonchalant. A new word.

The Follett Publishing Company "hip" workbook, *Play It Cool—In English* uses role-playing to help the youngsters learn the meaning of words. Lesson Three, for example, says to the student: "Get someone to help you act out each of these words (listed on page). Acting out a word is a good way to find the right words to express its meaning..." The Teacher's Guide also discusses how to use role-playing for developing verbal power as well as analytic ability. "Role-playing is one way, then, for the linguistically deprived to make up lost ground, for they are using these new powers of analysis and verbal skill not only with their own hip language but with standard language, too."*

Role-Playing in Teacher Training

In a program concerned with conveying low-income culture to teachers, one of the approaches is to have the teachers visit the homes of their pupils. This is very valuable but is limited by the fact that only a few visits of about an hour each take place during the semester. Role-playing can be utilized very effectively here by having groups of teachers who have visited the homes meet together to act out some of the situations they have seen or participated in at the homes.

The experience of each teacher will be added to that of all the others, but more important, through the technique of role reversal, the teachers can begin to know how the parents really feel. Here the group leader plays a decisive role. He should take a strong position in leading the discussion, pointing out the meaning of much of the low-income

**Play It Cool*, published by Follett Publishing Co., Chicago, 1967.

behavior that is role-played. He can bring in considerable academic content around the situations that have been witnessed by the audience. He can raise important questions which different members of the group, because of their varying experiences (from visiting the homes), may be able to shed light upon. The interpretations of the group can also be discussed and integrated around the situations that have been role-played.

Developing Teacher Styles

One of the special values of role-playing sessions is that the new teacher, or the student teacher, can discover and develop her own repertoire of skills. For example, we often suggest that a teacher in a deprived setting express herself physically and visually as much as possible: walk around the room, use gestures, touch the children, etc. But for many people this is simply not possible; it is not within the framework of their personalities and there is nothing more dangerous than attempting to manufacture a style for which you have no feeling. It will go over like a lead balloon. The teacher will feel stiff and uneasy in imitating what "doesn't come naturally," and the children, who are surprisingly sensitive, will know it is contrived. Whether the new teacher has any potential feeling for this "physical" pattern will soon be ascertained in the role-playing sessions. If the teacher does, the ensuing sessions can bring out this potential, can encourage her, and can help her to shape her future style.

If she does not have this particular skill, no matter, because fortunately there are innumerable ways of being an effective teacher, and role-playing can assist in finding and integrating the best approaches for the particular teacher. Depending on what kind of personality style she has, she will probably select different approaches and techniques from the things we have suggested. If she is a careful, meticulous person herself, she can perhaps synchronize more readily with the slow style of the disadvantaged child. If she has great patience, she may be able to appreciate the tenacious persistence that evidences itself in these children once they have become absorbed, and she may be able to bring them to this point more rapidly. If she is vivid and

exciting, and much interested in the subject, she should be encouraged to impart this enthusiasm to the children. If the teacher is a physically strong man, he should convey this to the children, not by display of his prowess, but by what one counselor at Wiltwyck so aptly called the "suggestion of strength"—"You never hit the kid, but your size and strength are always *there*, by the way you touch the boy, lift things, handle yourself, and so on."

But strength, of course, is not only established through the physical. The thin, small-voiced female teacher can be just as effective as the big baritone. Role-playing should help the new teacher to discover the manifold sources of strength and authority, and particularly her own resources in this capacity. Strength can be reflected to these children by definiteness, quiet, firm tones, consistency, standing by a statement, determination to teach, and so on. It is a tremendous mistake to think that authority and respect can be commanded through physical power only. The climax in role-playing comes when the new teacher begins to feel and act in the sessions as though the classroom were her fortress. You cannot tell people to be confident—but you can provide the conditions, knowledge, and practice that build confidence. Role-playing is one of the best confidence builders we know of for the new teacher.

Effective Teacher Styles

There is some tendency to develop a hypothetical model of the ideal good teacher. We tend to assume that good teachers ought to be healthy, well-adjusted people; however, it is not that simple. It is not suggested, of course, that we look for sick people and make them teachers.

Perhaps we should think about the development of individual teacher styles, some of which may have significant non-healthy components. Many different styles function well with low-income youngsters. Teachers succeed in different ways; there are many roads to Rome. In visits to schools in over thirty-five cities and a myriad of classroom situations, there has always been found at least one teacher in a school who, everyone agreed (children, parents, colleagues, and

administrators), is a "good" teacher. But the personality of each of these teachers, the manner of approach, and point of view were vastly different.*

For example, one style found typically is compulsive. This teacher is very detailed, very fussy, and she will teach things over and over. She is very concerned that she be understood, often treats adults like children, and is difficult to query. But actually in the classroom this same annoying behavior can be quite effective. Such teachers might be called *subliminated compulsives.* Of course, you have another kind of compulsive who is terrible in a teaching situation, because the compulsive quality isn't appropriately directed toward the outer problem. But the subliminated compulsives are people who have directed their compulsiveness into functional organization, order, structure, which disadvantaged children like very much; they are constantly concerned that the children understand, and they repeat over and over again.

Another type of teacher is the *boomer.* She shouts out in a loud, strong voice: "You're going to learn. I'm here to teach you, and there is no nonsense in this classroom." She lays the ground rules early, and the kids know immediately that there is a point beyond which they cannot go with her. They may not like her, but they learn. Although psychologists and educators might call this person hostile, she has learned to use this quality effectively.

There is another teacher who might be called the *maverick.* Everybody loves him but the boss. He upsets everything because he's always raising difficult questions and presenting ideas that disturb. This teacher is convinced that ideas are meant to disturb, to stir up. Consequently he develops a close link with his young and eager students. He is as surprised and curious as they are at each turn of mind, each new discovery, and it is this fresh quality that comes through to them.

Then there is the *coach,* an informal, earthy person. He sometimes is an athlete himself, but more basically he conducts his dialogue with the world by being physically expressive. Many low-income youngsters like this. Coming from homes in which the accent is often on activity and motion, they connect with this quality quickly and naturally—more natural for everyone, really, than sitting still at a desk for two or three unbroken hours.

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*The discussion of teacher types that follows is based on a joint unpublished paper with Arlene Hannah entitled "Teachers of the Poor," 1964.

In sharp contrast to this is the *quiet one.* This teacher accomplishes much the same goal by sincerity, calmness and definitiveness. Her essential dignity is what pervades the situation; she commands both respect and attention from her pupils.

We also have the *entertainer*—colorful, melodramatic, and most importantly, not afraid of having fun with the children. Frequently he makes mistakes through his sheer flair for the comic. When this happens, he is free enough to laugh with the children at his own blunders. His inventiveness may cause furrows in his supervisor's brow, as when he has children make western hats from a reading assignment about cowboys. But they learn more about cowboys, and are much more interested in reading the paper that is on their heads, than if a traditional method had been used.

This teacher actively involves the children; their opinions count, and they know it.

A striking example of another teacher style is what we might call the *secular* type. This fellow is usually relaxed and informal with the kids. He may have lunch with them or use the students' bathroom. You would be amazed at how many children do not *really* believe that teachers eat and sleep and go to the bathroom, just like people do! This fellow is often very comfortable in talking turkey with the kids, not in a mechanical or contrived way.

There are many other styles, but let us cite one more: the *intellectual.* This type is not academic, but really interested in knowledge, learning and getting the material over to the youngsters. He is interested in the substance of the material, not just because it is academically correct. He doesn't like classical music because he is supposed to, but because he likes all types of music; and it so happens that he also likes blues, jazz and popular music. He really has *broader* horizons. One such teacher was especially interested in "hip" talk. He actually did something which, in general, is a terrible thing to do. He learned "hip" language while working with these youngsters; something we would warn most people against doing. He was really interested and became genuinely involved in "hip" words. His concern with language, the real substance of it, allowed him to investigate the "hip" style without being false or condescending.

What is suggested here is that in preparation the teacher be faced

with these types, be told about these types, view films of these types, see these people in action, and finally that the teacher *role-play* the types. He might develop his repertoire by trying it out in permissive, unthreatening situations in his own group.

He might play the classroom, play different problems that arise, play the discipline problem, the disorder problem, and out of this role-play develop his own repertoire, because he will find that no matter what we talk about in general, he will formulate it in his own individual way, to fit his own specific personality.

More than practice teaching is needed to accomplish this, because the actual classroom situation cannot allow for full experimentation; one needs a practice situation of the role-play type—experimental permissive—to actually try out various techniques and approaches—to experiment with different styles, to see which ones fit, to blend them to one's own personality, and to develop one's own strength in doing this.

The Helper Principle: Learning Through Teaching

Another fascinating approach to the expansion of classroom learning is to be found in Ronald Lippitt's intriguing "peer learning" experiments which demonstrate that youngsters in the sixth grade can be helpful in teaching younger children—and can benefit themselves from playing the teacher role.

At a White House Conference on Education, Professor Jerrold Zaccharias proposed that we have students teach as a major avenue toward improving their own learning. Montessorians have long utilized children to help other children learn in the classroom.

Mobilization for Youth has used homework helpers with a fair amount of success. It may be that even more significant changes are taking place in the high school youngsters who are being used as tutors. Not only is it possible that their school performance is improving, but as a result of their new roles these youngsters may begin to perceive the possibility of embarking on teaching careers.

A connected issue worthy of mention is that in the new situations in the schools, where integration hopefully will be taking place, young

sters coming from segregated backgrounds will need help in catching up, in terms of reading skills and the like. It is generally argued that the white middle-class children who do not need this extra assistance will suffer. Their parents want these youngsters to be in a class with advanced pupils and not to be held back by youngsters who are behind.

The argument for homogeneous grouping is that it makes it easier to teach; i.e., we're setting up a system for the convenience of the teacher. Quite logically, the teacher takes the position—How can I teach a whole group of different people if they all have different abilities? However, even in homogeneous groups, the children are not all identical. No matter how you group them, they're different people. They just happen to be somewhat similar on a particular score, but they're different in background, sex, learning styles, tempo and timing. Only one variable has been isolated as a result of this grouping, but the teacher believes her job will be easier because she can operate at the same pace.

By the same token, however, we begin to water down the curriculum successively as we begin to label people as slower learners or less able. Those who learn more slowly are going to get less. Those in the second track are going to get a second-class education, and a third-class education will be offered those in the third track. This is what happens when one assumes that it is easier and more logical to teach people who learn roughly at the same pace.

Evidence, however, doesn't support the thesis. No evidence shows that homogeneous groupings work better for the students. Both here and in England, it appears that a bright child learns no better when placed with a group of bright kids than when grouped heterogeneously. And the poor kids—the so-called dumb kids—are hurt by the grouping. They end up doing worse than the so-called dumb kids left in heterogeneous groups. It is fairly obvious why. Grouping doesn't help the educational process. Most of these kids aren't stupid, despite our judgment. They know who's being grouped with whom even if the labeling is couched innocuously as "bluebirds" or whatever. If they don't know, the others will tell them. They soon learn to fulfill the role expected of them and—most destructive of all—learn to believe in the "truth" of the school's judgment of them.

To illustrate the importance of role expectation in determining

what children achieve in school—a few years ago, in Scotland, an IBM error was responsible for the school's sending a group of dull pupils into the bright track, and a group of bright students into the dull track.

About a year later, the school discovered the error and checked results. They found that the duller pupils were acting as if they were very bright, as if they had the innate ability to do the job expected of them. The bright pupils were behaving as if they were stupid, because role expectation, to a large extent, determines what you're going to do in a classroom. If the school believes that a pupil is incapable of doing anything, he'll never get an opportunity to show what he is really capable of achieving.

In terms of the helper principle, however, it may very well be that the more advanced youngsters can benefit in new ways from playing a teaching role. Not all fast, bright youngsters like to be in a class with similar children. We have been led to believe that if one is fast and bright he will want to be with others who are fast and bright, and this will act as a stimulus to his growth. It works for some people, but for others it most certainly does not. Some people find they do better in a group in which there is a great range of ability, in which they can stand out more, and, finally—and this is the point of the helper principle—in situations in which they can help other youngsters in the classroom. In other words, some children develop intellectually not by being challenged by someone ahead of them, but by helping somebody behind them, by being put into the tutor-helper role.

The marked increase today in the use of an age-old therapeutic approach—the use of people with a problem to help others with the same problem—has been especially helpful in the schools. It has also been found that the principle is beneficial to both the helper (the model) and the helped.

Students As Helpers

Schneider reports on a small study in which youngsters with varying levels of reading ability were asked to read an "easy" book as practice for reading to younger children. She observes:

> For the child who could read well, this was a good experience. For the child who could not read well it was an even better experience. He was reading material on a level within his competence and he could read it with pleasure. Ordinary books on his level of interest were too difficult for him to read easily and so he did not read books for pleasure. Reading for him was hard, hard work; often it left him feeling stupid and helpless. This time it was different ...he would share his gift with little children just as a parent or teacher does.*

In a sense these children were role-playing the helper role in this experience, as they were reading aloud to adults in anticipation of later reading to small children.

The classroom situation illustrates an interesting offshoot of the helper principle. Some children, when removed from a class in which they are below average and placed in a new group in which they are in the upper half of the class, manifest many new qualities and are in turn responded to more positively by the teacher. This can occur independently of whether or not they play a helper role. But some of the same underlying mechanisms are operative in the direct helper situations—the pupil in the new group is responded to more, he stands out more, more is expected of him, and generally he responds in turn and demands more of himself. Even though he may not be in the helper role as such, similar forces are at work in both cases, stimulating more active responses. (Unfortunately, this principle may be counteracted if the teacher treats the entire group as a "lower" or poorer group and this image is absorbed in an undifferentiated manner by all the members of the class.)

As any teacher can report, there is nothing like learning through teaching. By having to explain something to someone else one's attention is focused more sharply. This premise seems to have tremendous potentiality that social workers have left unused.

The helper principle may be especially valuable for disadvantaged youngsters, because in their informal out-of-school learning they tend to learn much more from each other, from their brothers and sisters, than from their parents reading them a book or answering their questions. They are essentially peer learners by style and experience.

In an area where there are precious few rewards—in experimental education—and in the ghetto, where inadequate schools and wide-

*Gussie Albert Schneider, "Reading of the Children, By the Children, For the Children." Unpublished manuscript, 1964. (Mimeographed.)

spread illiteracy exact a terrible toll--rewards are even harder to come by. It was, therefore, with considerable pride that Mobilization for Youth reported a major success story carved out of years of detailed research and experiment on New York's Lower East Side.

Launched in 1963, the Homework Helper Program involves a system of mutual education among ghetto children which employs high school students as paid tutors for their younger elementary school friends. Advance word from the researchers reported that the results were "startling" and "remarkable."

And the final results did show that the program had a dramatic effect on the reading levels of the students being taught. Most surprising and significant, however, were the gains in reading achievement recorded by the tutors themselves—as much as three and a half years in a six-month period!

Probably the most eloquent testimony came from the national and local press. Mobilization for Youth has felt that its mandate includes "spreading the message" about proved techniques to other institutions throughout the country. The New York City Board of Education has already adopted the Homework Helper Program, and other cities are likely to follow this plan.

Program for a Revolution

Piecemeal approaches to the improvement of the education of the poor have provided many exciting experiments and some definite gains in learning. The time is now ripe for an all-out attack, integrating our best knowledge in an effort to produce truly large, enduring improvements in the learning of disadvantaged youngsters *at all ages.* This requires leadership, new techniques and new manpower.

In order to achieve maximum success in educating the poor, the following are proposed:

1) Non-professional teacher aides to be recruited from among the poor themselves, to assist teachers so that they can play more fully their professional roles as teachers. This auxiliary manpower would

also provide excellent male role models for educationally deprived youngsters.

2) Teachers to be trained in the use of teaching techniques (e.g., the dialect game, the helper principle, role-playing, etc.) attuned to the styles and *strengths* of disadvantaged children. The positives must come first. Around these positives we can begin to correct the limitations of the child in relation to reading, school know-how, language skills, etc. If the teacher expects more, he will get more if his positive expectations are built on an understanding of why he is using the exciting new technologies.

3) In-service teacher institutes using trained master teachers to introduce knowledge and techniques related to immediate classroom problems. An attempt should be made to have teachers use techniques that fit not only the style of the children, but their own style and interests as well.

Full participation of the trainees should be intensively solicited with regard to encouraging them to formulate their needs, how they see their problems, and their suggestions for meeting these problems. Hence, small teacher meetings should be organized to discuss (and role-play practice) ways of meeting classroom difficulties. In this context, the leaders would offer for discussion techniques that have evolved elsewhere. A group or team approach would be a central feature in the training with a strong emphasis on building *esprit de corps.*

4) New urban readers and other appropriate curriculum materials, especially the new teaching machines (programmed learning). Readers that have been developed in Detroit by Follett Publishing Company and in New York by Bank Street College and published by MacMillan, should be included in the program. These readers incorporate disadvantaged people and themes in a more representative view of urban life; the research in Detroit indicates that *all youngsters, not only the disadvantaged, read better with these readers*—that they laugh more and feel that the stories are more interesting and lively.

The new literacy techniques, *Words in Color,* published by the Encyclopedia Britannica, and Myron Woolman's *Progressive Accelerated*

Technique, are achieving dramatic, rapid results with non-literate adults. The writer suggests that they become integrated in the proposed program.

5) New administrative arrangements such as team teaching, multiple periods, nongraded classes, educational parks, intensive extra-school programs (during summers, weekends, and after-school hours.) These extra-school programs can introduce into the school such specialists as artists, dancers and musicians to develop the artistic talents of the youngsters. Tutors could be brought in here also and special uses of programmed learning and educational TV could be planned.

6) Special parent-teacher groups, led by non-professional parent education coordinators, directed toward developing full, genuine *two-way communication* between the parents and the schools. Parents could be involved as important supportive elements in the program. They should be used to back up the role of a school that really wants to teach the child and should be listened to attentively by the school and by non-professional parent-education coordinators who mediate between them and the school. They should not be asked, however, to read to the children or to do homework with them or any tasks which they find essentially uncongenial. They can function to check up on the homework as Samuel Sheppard has had them do in St. Louis and to work in a unified way with the school, encouraging the child to learn, to attend punctually, to do his homework, etc.

Conclusion

Large-scale improvements in the learning of disadvantaged youngsters have failed in the past because most of the previous programs were unrelated to each other, accented deficits, and neglected to focus on the teacher as the key to the revolution in education.

The blueprint we have presented is directed toward meeting the felt needs of teachers. Teachers want smaller classes, new materials and methods to aid them in teaching, a voice in decisions that affect

them, a reduction of discipline problems, a greater feeling of importance or respect.

The program is intended to meet these objectives to varying degrees. It attempts to provide nonprofessional assistance for teachers in the classroom; it introduces new methods for teaching the children; it encourages the participation of teachers with regard to the use of the new manpower and the new techniques; it does not impose new methods on teachers but rather stimulates them to select and develop methods appropriate to their styles and interests; it leaves entirely to the individual teachers the decision as to whether they will select nonprofessional aides to be used in their own classes; through the use of added personnel, it endeavors to meet the discipline problems within the classroom, in the lunch period and in the corridors; it brings new importance to the teacher by centering on him as the significant change agent. And it also places somebody below the teacher in the school hierarchy.

The program endeavors to help the student by building on his positives and expanding them. It aims to do this by assisting the teachers to develop and utilize approaches especially suited to the styles and strengths of disadvantaged youngsters but *applicable to all youngsters.* The program, in essence, endeavors to overcome the difficulties in the student's learning by concentrating on his positives. It hopes to build bridges from his strengths that will enable him to overcome his deficits.

The approach is directed toward convincing the disadvantaged student that he can learn and become educated without necessarily becoming a middle-class stereotype—that he can retain his own identity. The keynote is the following quotation from Ralph Ellison:

> If you can show me how I can cling to that which is real to me, while teaching me a way into a larger society, then I will drop my defense and my hostility, but I will sing your praises and I will help you to make the desert bear fruit.

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